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RIGHT OF SECESSION—THE IMPENDING CRISIS.

S P E E C H

OF

WILLIAM S. HOLMAN,
OF INDIANA,

ON

THE STATE OF THE UNION,

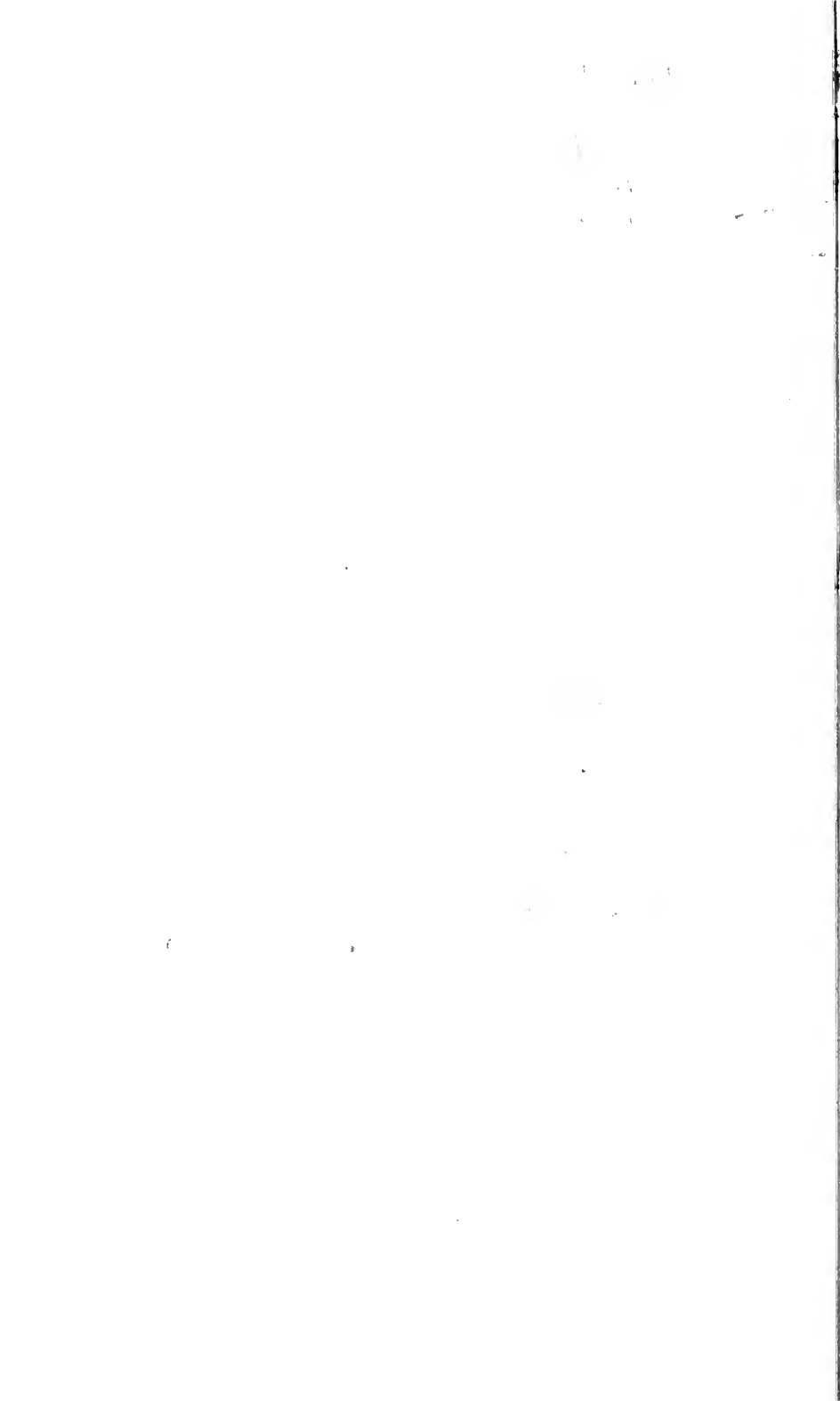
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S P E E C H .

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the Army Bill—

MR. HOLMAN said :

MR. CHAIRMAN: The fact can no longer be concealed, sir, that we are in the midst of revolution. The American people are compelled to behold a spectacle which, in the confidence of long years of peaceful security, they have deemed to be impossible—the Union, established by the sacrifices of their fathers, and sanctified by imperishable memories, quivering in the very agony of dissolution! Who, sir, can stand unappalled in contemplation of the fact? Who can but regret that he is a part of the generation which, while bearing onward the flag of the Republic, seduced by the unworthy passions of the hour, has suffered its sacred folds to be trampled in the dust? I will not discuss, sir, the merits of the questions which have given rise to this alarming condition of public affairs, or indulge in crimination upon the North or the South. These, sir, are swallowed up for the time by the graver question, whether the Government itself shall continue to exist: whether the Constitution by which it is created possesses the inherent power to resist its own destruction.

If, sir, a State possesses the right of secession; if the strength of the Government is founded only on the voluntary concert of its various parts; if any part of the nation can withdraw from the common Confederacy at pleasure, without reference to the irreparable injustice that may result to the other parts of the Confederacy; then, sir, is ours the weakest Government on the face of the earth; the prosperity of its people at the mercy of every storm of human passion; its apparent greatness a miserable delusion, as baseless as the fabric of a dream.

It is urged, sir, that if a State does actually secede from the Union, the question whether the right exists, or whether it be an act of revolution, or an exercise of power without right, is wholly immaterial; that the consequences are the same. The proposition is not true. If the right exists, the remaining States must acquiesce, whatever may be the consequences to their material interest. If it does not, they may determine, without aggression, what policy may be necessary to vindicate their own rights against the consequences of the act of the seceding State. But beyond this, sir, there are tribunals to which States and nations are responsible.

The question whether the overthrow of this Government, by an act of secession, be in conformity with the compact by which it was founded, or an act of unwarrantable violence, in derogation of public faith, may determine the judgment which the civilized nations of the earth, and the friends of freedom throughout the world, may pronounce upon the act of its destruction. But above all, sir, it will determine the judgment of that tribunal from which no State nor generation of men can escape—the impartial judgment of posterity. If this Republic is to perish, and furnish another argument for kings and consolidated power; if the proud expectations of the illustrious men who formed it are to be disappointed; if the Government which is at once the hope and the pride and the glory of down-trodden millions is to become another mockery of human aspirations; if the ark of the covenant of our fathers, with the visible evidence of the approbation of Almighty God still resting upon it, is to be dashed to pieces, let that final tribunal determine the character of the act, and denounce the sentence of its vindictive wrath upon the memory of the guilty. In the midst, sir, of the horrors of national ruin, if they shall come upon us, the question whether they have resulted from an exercise of rightful power or from violated faith will not fail to enter into the judgment which even the present generation will pronounce.

I deny, sir, the right of a State to secede from this Union. The whole history of the country, from the first suggestion of a union among the American colonies to the present hour, disproves it. It is disproved by the Articles of Confederation and the events which led to the organization of the Government; by the history of the present Constitution, and the opinions of the great statesmen who formed it; and, above all, by the very terms of the Constitution itself. The Union formed by the Articles of Confederation was in the nature of a compact or league between States. It was a Confederacy of the States. It did not sufficiently unite the American people as one nation. The federal authority was insufficient. And, although it was declared to be “a perpetual Union” between the enumerated States, our fathers, to form “a more perfect Union,” and give strength and efficiency to their Government, ordained the present Constitution, founding its authority, not upon a compact or league between States, but upon the original source of political power; not upon the sovereignty of States, but upon the original sovereignty of the people:

“We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

The form of ratification cannot change its character. The people themselves, through their agents and representatives, declared it to

be their own act, not as the people of separate and independent States, but as the people of the United States of America. The political history of the world, sir, does not furnish an example of a more explicit exercise of sovereign power in organizing its elements into one indissoluble nation. The authority, then, on which the Government of the United States rests, is exactly the same on which the governments of the States are founded; both are equally created by the people, by the exercise of their original sovereignty. Certain powers are invested in the one government, and certain powers are delegated to the other, and each are equally sovereign within the limits of the powers conferred. The people of the several States are not more united for the purposes of domestic government, than the people of the whole nation are for the purposes of national government. While jealous of their reserved rights, the people declared the Government of the United States, as to the powers conferred upon it, to be the supreme government. To it was confided the power to provide for the common defence and the general welfare of the whole nation; and the Constitution thus created, and the laws and treaties which should be made in pursuance with its authority, were declared to be the supreme law of the land. But the powers not delegated were reserved to the States or the people. *But, sir, was the power reserved to the people of any State to destroy the Government? To annul the powers necessary to the well being and common defence of all the contracting parties? To withdraw their consent that the common Constitution, and the laws made under it, should be the supreme law, not of one State, or a part of the States, but of all the States?* No, sir; such a reservation would have been utterly inconsistent with the whole instrument. The wise statesmen of the day, forming a Government which they trusted would endure through all time, would never have placed it at the mercy of every wave of human passion. The whole Constitution, from its title to the last section of its amendments, bristles with denials of this "colossal heresy"—the right of a part of the people who made the Constitution to destroy it. No, sir; all of the States together, except so far as they may represent the sovereignty of the whole people, could not annul the binding force of the Constitution.

To present the evidence, sir, that the right of secession is in conflict with the opinions of the men who formed the Government, would be to present almost the entire history of the Constitution. I content myself with the authority of a few of the most illustrious men, whose names have become household words, and whose statues decorate your Capitol.

In the ever-memorable farewell address of the Father of his Country, it is said :

"The basis of our political system is, the right of the people to make and alter their constitutions of government. But the Constitution which at any time exists, until changed by the explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all."

Mr. Madison, in his letter to Mr. Trist, on the 23d day of December, 1832, said :

“ It is remarkable how closely the nullifiers, who make the name of Mr. Jefferson the pedestal for their colossal heresy, shut their eyes and lips whenever his authority is ever so clearly and emphatically against them. You have noticed what he says in his letters to Monroe and Carrington (pp. 43, 293, vol. 2) with respect to the power of the old Congress to coerce delinquent States; and his reasons for preferring for the purpose a naval to a military force; and, moreover, his remark that it was not necessary to find a right to coerce in the Federal articles, that being inherent in the nature of a compact. It is high time that the claim to secede at will should be put down by the public opinion.”

Mr. Pinckney, of South Carolina, in the convention that framed the Constitution, said :

“ I apprehend that the true intention of the States in uniting is, to have a firm national Government, capable of effectually executing its acts and dispensing the benefits of its protection. In it alone can be vested those powers and prerogatives which more particularly distinguish a sovereign State.”

President Jackson, in his celebrated proclamation, said :

“ It [the General Government] is a Government in which all of the people are represented, which operates directly on the people individually, not upon the State. They retain all the powers they did not grant. But each State having expressly parted with so many powers as to constitute jointly with the other States a single nation, cannot, from that period, pass any right to secede, because such secession does not break a league, but destroys the unity of a nation.”

But if, in defiance of right, by a violation of public faith, on pretence of intolerable oppression—for the remedy of which no appeal has been made to the national Congress, to the Federal judiciary, to the States, or the people of the States—a State, upon her own responsibility, does secede from the Union, what, sir, is the remedy? *My answer is, sir, the constitutional enforcement of the laws.* The General Government, charged with the duty of providing for the general welfare, cannot shrink from the responsibility of preventing the act of secession from impairing the just rights of the remaining States. *As the agent of the whole people, it may not hesitate in the performance of its duty. It cannot abdicate Government. It cannot abandon the trust it has accepted.*

But how shall the rights of the remaining States be vindicated? By levying war on the seceding States? No, sir. The people have not invested the Federal Government with power to recognize the right of secession. As to the General Government, the act of attempted secession is a mere nullity. The Government cannot wage war upon one of its parts; but it must execute the laws, so far as their execution involves the interests of the whole people. But gentlemen say that this is coercion. What is meant, sir, by coercion? If you mean by it that, if a State shall refuse to perform those duties which, in the very nature of things, must be the result of voluntary action, and which moral obligation can alone enforce, the Government of the United States, by the army or navy, shall compel their observance—then, sir, am I against coercion.

If you mean, sir, that the mailed hand of the Government shall be laid upon a State to compel her, as the only escape from violence, to elect members of Congress, her citizens to perform the offices of judges of the Federal courts and the duties of jurors, to act as collectors of the revenue and postmasters—then, sir, I am against coercion. These are duties which even tyranny cannot enforce; and their performance, however desirable, is not indispensable to the general welfare of the Union. If a State abandons the benefits of the Union, so far as the act affects herself only, no one may complain. But if you mean, sir, by coercion, the enforcement of the laws necessary to the welfare of the whole Union—laws enacted by the authority founded on the original sovereignty, and involving the constitutional rights of the whole people of the United States; if you mean, sir, by coercion, the constitutional enforcement of these laws as they have been from the beginning—then, sir, I am in favor of coercion. If you mean, sir, by coercion, the collection of the public revenues as they have been collected for three-quarters of a century, and which are necessary to the very existence of the nation, or the protection of property purchased by the common treasure and for the general benefit of the whole people of the United States; if these, sir, are acts of coercion, then I am for coercion; and the right and duty of such coercion by the General Government, by the exercise of all of its constitutional powers, no State, however blinded by the passions of the hour, can deny.

But these, sir, are not in strictness acts of coercion, but the ordinary enforcement of the laws by the agencies agreed upon by the common consent of the whole people in the formation of the Confederacy.

The sufficiency of the powers conferred by the people on the General Government for maintaining the majesty of the law, cannot be called in question. *It is not so much a power conferred as a duty imposed.* “The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defence and general welfare of the United States;” and the President, representing the executive power of the whole people, and solemnly sworn to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, is enjoined “to take care that the laws be faithfully executed;” and, sir, he cannot shrink from the duty nor abdicate the power.

But how does the question stand upon authority? I have already presented the opinion of Mr. Madison on the power of coercion and confirming the views of Mr. Jefferson. Mr. Jefferson, in one of the letters referred to, said, as a reason for providing a navy to coerce the Barbary States:

“It will arm the Federal head (the old Congress) with the safest of all instruments of coercion over its delinquent members, and prevent its using what would be less safe.” [Manifestly referring to military force.]—*Jefferson's letter to John Adams, July 11, 1785.*

Again:

"It will be said there is no money in the Treasury. There never will be money in the Treasury until the Confederacy shows its teeth. Every rational citizen must wish to see an effective instrument of coercion, and should fear to see it on any other element than the water. A naval force can never endanger our liberties nor occasion bloodshed; a land force would do both."—*Jefferson's letter to Col. Monroe, August 11, 1786.*

Again:

"It has been so often said, as to be generally believed, that Congress has no power by the Confederation to enforce anything; for example: contributions of money. It was not necessary to give them that power expressly; they have it by the law of nature."—*Jefferson's letter to Carrington, August 4, 1787.*

To whose opinions, sir, can the American people appeal with more confidence on such a question as this than to those of the statesmen who, of all others, gave form and character to the Constitution, and were alike enemies of consolidated power, and the sleepless friends of the reserved rights.

But I present another authority, sir, which even the people of South Carolina may not refuse to hear; a statesman whose devotion to South Carolina was only surpassed by his love of justice and attachment to the American Union—a man, sir, who as a patriot, statesman, citizen, and scholar, was an honor to the race. At the nullification period of 1832, he was, I believe, a member of the Legislature of South Carolina. I present a part of his address to the people of that State on the subject of secession, not as an authority only, but on account of the vigor of the argument:

"Suffer not yourselves to be deceived by the idea that the General Government will recognize your title to be out of the Union. It is perfectly clear; they cannot. They have no authority to abandon any portion of the Union. The Territory of Carolina was committed to their jurisdiction by a joint action of the States; and nothing short of the absolute necessity imposed by an unsuccessful war can release them from the obligations of that trust. They are commanded and empowered to make all laws necessary and proper to protect the custom-house and the post office, their courts and judges, and all their officers. Can you doubt that they will do it? They must treat Carolina as in the Union, whatever she may say to the contrary."

"If a State employs a power which is revolutionary as to the Union, and, of course, belligerent in its character, the Union must possess and will exercise a corresponding right of retaliation. Are you in the Union? Blockade is, then, a clear exercise of the power to collect the revenue. Are you out of the Union? Then in the exercise of an undoubted power to compel the observance of a treaty broken by yourselves. But Congress will not regard it as a belligerent measure, whatever you may say on the subject. They must consider it nothing more than the ordinary case of the President, as commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy of the Union, employing the latter in the discharge of his duty, to 'take care that the laws be faithfully executed.'"—*Grimké's letter to the people of South Carolina, December 1, 1832.*

Sir, the right of secession does not exist. The duty of enforcing the laws is imperative. If the sacrifices of our fathers shall be found useless; if the Union of the States, which was formed by their wisdom, preserved by their fraternal forbearance, and defended with their blood, shall become a mockery to their hopes, a dishon-

ored monument to their memory, and a stigma and reproach to their children, the imperfect judgment of the present generation, and the severe and unerring judgment of posterity, will not suffer the plea of right to palliate the crime of its destruction, and will brand this Government with the infamy of broken faith, if it shall, in the hour of peril, abandon the sacred trust committed to its keeping by the American people.

But while, sir, there is no right of secession, and although the people have imposed upon this Government the duty of enforcing the laws, no American statesman will question the right of revolution as a remedy for *intolerable oppression*. Can any State of this Union present a case, she herself being the judge, that will justify a resort to this final remedy? From what Government would she revolt? Certainly not from the government of the States; for each, as to local government, is independent. Revolution, then, could only be the overturning of the Government of the United States. Can any State assert that that Government has been oppressive? The gentleman from Missouri [Mr. ANDERSON] discussed this subject yesterday. What showing, sir, did he make against the Government? Its powers are wisely divided into three departments. Which of these departments, sir, has oppressed a State of the South? *The judicial?* Why, even the gentleman himself eulogized that department as eminently wise and just and impartial. *The legislative?* No State has sought to impeach it. From the beginning, no law has been enacted to which the South has not given her assent. *The executive?* No State of the South will charge it with one act of oppression. Where, then, sir, is the right of revolution? The popular voice is unfriendly to the South. Why, sir, in the recent expression, a majority of a million of voices, even by the gentleman's admission, were raised in defence of her constitutional rights. But the policy of sister States has been unconstitutional and unjust. The majority? No, the minority: for every southern State admits that the fifteen States of the South and four States of the North have been true to their engagements. No, sir; it comes to this: that, by the constitutional action of the people, one of three departments will be controlled by a policy unfriendly to the South; and that, too, will be controlled by the others, against which the South raises no complaint. No, sir; at the bar of impartial public judgment, *the case would utterly fail*. The Government has been eminently wise and patriotic and just. And such will be the judgment of history. The opinions of a minority of the American people are unfriendly to the domestic policy of the South. This is unwise and illiberal, but is it *intolerable oppression*? No, sir; the right of secession is denied by the Constitution; and there is no oppression to justify the right of revolution. If the Government is overturned, the act will be without justification or excuse. The evils that exist—the *want of fraternal comity between the two sections of the Union*—admits of remedy without invoking the pres-

ence of the destroying angel, and calling down the Divine vengeance upon our heads.

But, sir, are not States amenable at the bar of public justice? For eighty-two years the people of the United States, in the application of the public revenues, have acted on the theory that they were one people, and that any tax levied upon the common industry of the nation was imposed for the common good, and not for the benefit of particular States. Uncounted millions have been levied upon the labor of the American people, and cheerfully paid, to provide for the common defence and general welfare of the whole country. For the benefit of the general commerce, light-houses have been erected on every coast. To protect the Republic from invasion, forts have been built at every exposed point upon our borders, not for the protection of one State, but of all the States. Is it possible, sir, that any part of the American people will consider it consistent with good faith and national honor, that these results of national industry shall be appropriated to the exclusive use of particular States? Sir, every citizen of your teeming millions, wherever he may have been—in your marts of commerce upon the borders of the oceans, or in the secure and peaceful valleys of the distant West, upon your ships in remote seas, or in the huts of the trapper in the gorges of your mountains, on the borders of the Rio Grande, or by the lakes of the North—wherever he may have been, or whatever his pursuits, he felt that the honor, the well-being, and the defence of the nation, was his care. What citizen, sir, has not contributed to the building of your light-houses and navy-yards and arsenals and dock-yards and forts, and providing munitions of war? These works, sir, for the national welfare and defence, have been erected wherever the common interests of the nation required them, upon the ocean or upon soil voluntarily surrendered to the Government in New York and Massachusetts, Virginia and South Carolina, and elsewhere, not for any particular State or for its benefit, but for the whole American people. I ask again, sir, can any State, without a flagrant violation of good faith, appropriate the common industry of the nation to her own exclusive use?

The great West, with her industrious and peaceful people, devoted to agriculture, and deriving no direct benefits from duties on foreign commerce, receiving no other benefits from the tax on her labor, save protection from foreign invasion, has cheerfully contributed millions to erect works of national defence on the coast of the Atlantic: can any State think so meanly of the manhood of her people as to suppose she will tamely submit to the appropriation of these works by particular States? The defence of New York and Charleston, of Boston and Savannah, has been the common care of the nation. *We have removed mountains of granite from New England to the port of Charleston to erect barriers against a common enemy.* The common toil of the American people, in the con-

fidence of national faith, have made the coast of South Carolina to frown defiance on the enemies of the Republic. Can these cities entertain the belief that other portions of our people can consent to their assertion of exclusive ownership of these works in derogation of the common right? Can South Carolina, whose chivalrous sons are sensitively alive to everything that pertains to their own honor, or the honor of their State, consider it possible that the other States of the Union, whose sons are equally sensitive of honor, equally brave and chivalrous, can submit to the startling wrong of her appropriating to her exclusive use the works of national defence upon her borders as though they were the work of her own hands? Can she think so poorly of American spirit and of the national sense of honor? SIR, THEY WILL NOT—they cannot submit to it consistently with honor or justice. These works were not built for South Carolina, or for her exclusive defence. Congress, even according to the doctrine of her own statesmen, never possessed the power of appropriating one dollar of the national treasure except for national objects.

The attempt to seize upon these works is an act of war; they were erected by the common consent of the nation, with the common treasure of the nation, in the faith of the national integrity, and for national defence; and, sir, the honor of the nation is involved in their appropriation to the purpose for which they were designed. That honor, sir, will not be sullied. *Yet, while it is a goodly thing to have a giant's strength, it is tyrannous to use it like a giant.* The very strength of the Government will induce forbearance. It is inconsistent with the spirit of the nation to treat a State, a member of the political household, however hostile her attitude may be, as a revolted province. South Carolina and her sister States, who have resorted to this extraordinary method of redressing alleged grievances, will be wooed back into the sisterhood of States, even in the spirit of maternal kindness—a spectacle unheard of in the history of the world. But let her and them beware! the common method is not the less powerful because she is tender and pacific and forbearing. Let them not provoke the terrors of the parent's wrath. The forbearance of this Government will correspond with its irresistible strength. The honor of the nation is dear to every patriot's heart; *the flag of the Republic is sacred.* Can South Carolina and her confederate States believe that the sense of honor has died out in the hearts of the American people; that manhood and manly courage, and the sentiment of justice exist no more in their sister States? South Carolina may insult the honor of the nation; she may seize upon the public property; she may strike down and trample upon the ensign of the Republic—an act which, if done by the combined and countless millions of Europe, armed to the teeth, would be resented upon the instant, even if it involved every farm-house and hamlet and village and town and city in this broad land in indiscriminate ruin—yet

the nation will bear all this, for the Marions and the Sumters and the Rutledges and the Pinckneys were sons of South Carolina ; and it may be that that flag which she has loved so tenderly, and which her chivalrous sons have borne so bravely on many a field red with the blood of the enemies of the Republic, may, when the passion of the hour subsides, become again dear to her heart. *But let her remember that her sentiments of honor and justice and courage are the common sentiments of the American people ; let her not remain estranged from the heart of her country until she shall cease to be embraced by her sympathies : for no terrors, sir, can equal the terrors of a parent's wrath.*

Sir, the questions of this hour are of fearful importance to the brave yet industrious and peaceful people whom in part I have, as you have, sir, the honor to represent—the people who have established an empire in the great Northwest. In the disruption of the Union, if such a terrible calamity should come upon us, the immediate interests of our industry are peculiarly involved. We, of all others, sir, cannot consent to the dissolution of the Union. *Let the South and the North remember, sir, that our highways to the Gulf and to the ocean cannot be obstructed.* The energy and fortitude, and courage and enterprise which have established that empire, will never consent that tribute shall be laid upon their labor. Whatever misfortunes may befall us, I trust, sir, that that never will be attempted ; but if it should be, the mighty flood of the Father of Waters is not more resistless than would be the aroused spirit of our people.

I speak the more freely, sir, on these subjects, because I am one of the million and a half of men in the free States, who have defended and will still defend the constitutional rights of our fellow-citizens of the South, many of whom seem now willing to desert us to the tender mercies of our common political opponents ; and because, sir, if some of the States of the North have reversed the teachings of our fathers, and adopted a policy destructive of a just and fraternal comity between the States, and have inaugurated, as is asserted by the South, the present perils, and furnished at least a pretext, if it were possible, for extenuating the crime of national destruction, the State of Indiana, which I in part represent, is not a party to the offence. Her fertile soil, the gift of Virginia to the Union, herself a child of that Union, she has never wavered in her devotion to the Constitution and the Union of the States. Her statute-books have never been dishonored by an act of nullification, nor her people by resistance to the enforcement of the laws. By the beautiful river on her southern border, she is indissolubly united with Virginia and Pennsylvania and Kentucky and Ohio and Illinois and the great States upon the borders of the Mississippi, *and no State or citizen of a State can charge her with an act of violated faith.* She is devoted to the Union, not only because of its illustrious memories and countless blessings, but by the ties of

kindred and of blood. Her children must go to the valleys of Virginia and the coasts of Maryland, to Kentucky and Tennessee and the Carolinas, to the hills of New England and the shores of the Hudson and the Delaware, to visit the graves of their fathers and the homes of their childhood. She has received no more material aid from the Union, save protection to the peaceful industry of her citizens. With near a million and a half of people, she has neither dock-yard, nor navy yard, nor arsenal, nor fort; the General Government has scarcely furnished her a stand of arms. She has been content that her defences should be the defences of the nation. For fifty years her people have cheerfully borne every burden which the wisdom of the General Government has thought fit to impose upon them, in peace and in war, and millions upon millions of treasure coined from the sweat of their industry have poured into the common Treasury of the Republic, for the general welfare and common defence. *She has kept her faith; she has broken no covenant;* and with clean hands she will resist the breaking of the most sacred covenant ever sanctioned by mortals—the covenant sealed with the blood of our fathers—the compact of the Union.

For myself, sir, as a Democrat, while I have resisted and deplored the sectional policy of the dominant party of the North, and warned our people of its danger, I have not been able to forget, sir, that the spirit of the northern Democracy was crushed and stricken down by a corresponding policy of the dominant party of the South; the partial success of the Republican party, upon which is predicated this suicidal policy of secession, is attributable to the feuds in the ranks of the hitherto indomitable Democracy; yet I see, sir, in the election of Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency, however much to be deplored, nothing to justify this extraordinary remedy. Who could have imagined, sir, that in a free Government, where diversities of opinion are inevitable, the election of a Chief Magistrate peacefully and by a constitutional majority, and before any act is committed or policy is announced, however illiberal and unjust the principles by which the election was controlled might be, should furnish an excuse for at once overturning the Government, and that Government still the best, sir, infinitely, infinitely the best, upon which the beneficent smiles of the Father of mankind have ever rested? If it were possible, sir, to look at the question in a mere partisan light, I should complain with bitterness that our southern brethren, by whom we have stood so long and so faithfully, desert us, even while we still control the policy of the Government, while no act of the nation is the subject of complaint, and leave us to fight our battles alone.

But, sir, why this precipitancy? Will our brethren of the South destroy the Government and involve us all in indiscriminate ruin, without even giving us an opportunity to consider the evils of which they complain? Are they less interested in its permanency than ourselves? For myself, sir, I will sacrifice any pride of opinion

to save the Union. I should reluctantly touch the Constitution—the work of the grand old master-workmen. I should reluctantly impose restrictions on popular freedom in the Territories. I would consent to it, but only to save the Confederacy. *What sacrifice would I not make to save it?*

When I have stood, sir, upon one of those beautiful hills that overhang the waters of the Ohio, and have taken in at a glance the distant hills of Kentucky and Ohio, and of my own native State, descending in fertile valleys to the verge of that noble river; and further off, the waters of the Miami disappearing in the distance, and the whole scene covered with farm-houses and cornfields and green meadows and vineyards and rising villages and prosperous towns; while the tones of cheerful labor, in a thousand voices, swelled up and mingled together, and God's blessed sunlight gilded the whole landscape, I have thought of the darkness and agony of that hour when the storm which our unhallowed passions have been arousing should sweep over the glorious prospect, a messenger of ruin; when the sounds of industry and the cheerful voices of childhood should no longer float on the river, or its waves bear southward the fruits of the labor of many prosperous States; but armed men should march upon its desolated borders, the sounds of war should float upon its waves, reddening with fraternal blood; and its bosom, instead of the peaceful keel, should bear the munitions of war, and the labor and hopes of years become the prey of the spoiler. And I have felt, sir, in my very soul, the value of this peaceful Union, and that that man who should contribute to its destruction would be, of all mortals, from the flood to the final fire, in the sight of God the most guilty.

I can speak for the patriotism of my immediate constituents; and I believe, sir, that I am able to express the sentiments of the State of Indiana. I believe, sir, she would cheerfully sanction, as a measure of peace, the propositions of Judge DOUGLAS, or those submitted to the country by the committee of the border States; and I have every reason to believe that an overwhelming majority of her people would sustain the propositions submitted to the Senate by the Senator from Kentucky, whose venerable years unite the past glories of the Republic with its present dishonor. She does not expect, sir, that this great Republic can be preserved, except by the exercise of the justice and wisdom and forbearance in which it was formed. She remembers, sir, that the dominant section of the Union should act with magnanimity, and that the interests involved are too great to justify the mastery of prejudice or passion, or the supremacy of the mere pride of opinion. *I believe, sir, that she will concede and concede and concede, and compromise and compromise and compromise, to preserve the blessings of a peaceful Union;* that she will go to the very verge and utmost boundary of every demand which justice may make or honor may grant. She will do more, sir. She will entreat and implore her sister States, of the

North and of the South, by a remembrance of our common origin and the ties of our common and kindred blood; by our common memories and our common hopes; by the graves of our fathers and the cradles of our children; by the consideration of all that we have been, of all that we are, and of all that we may be as a nation if the blessings of the Union shall continue, to forbear from the work of destruction. *Yet, sir, she will never consent, by her voice, by her acts, or by her silence, that this Union shall be destroyed.* She will stand the more firmly by the altar of the common Union as the storms may deepen around it. She will account that hand the hand of an enemy that shall be raised to tear down the temple of the Constitution. And if, sir, it shall involve her sense of justice and honor, and no other sacrifice will avail; *if it must be*, in its defence she will command her brave and patriotic sons to dare the peril of perishing beneath its ruins.

But I cannot despair of the Republic. I would still believe, sir, and trust in God that the heart of the American people, North and South, though filled with the bitterness of passion, is still devoted to the Union, and still glories in the flag of our common country, though its stars grow dim in the gathering darkness. I trust—though it is hoping against hope—that they will still say to the gallant ship that was launched by our fathers on the ocean of human passions in the midst of so many hopes and fears:

“Thou, too, sail on, O ship of State,
Sail on; O Union, strong and great,
Humanity, with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate,
In spite of rock and tempest’s roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore.
Sail on; nor fear to breast the sea;
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee;
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o’er our fears,
Are all with thee—are all with thee.”

May the Lord God of our fathers shield the gallant old ship from the fierce waves of the impending storm.



